



Proud to sponsor the Yarra Valley Bonsai Society

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Proud sponsor of the Yarra Valley Bonsai Society

www.bonsaisensation.com.au



PO Box 345 Mount Evelyn, VIC
3796 Australia
www.yarravalleybonsai.org.au
info@yarravalleybonsai.org.au
Reg. Assoc A0052264P
Pres: Geoff P 0430 130 955
Sec: Lindsay H 0403 800 671
Treas: Julie H 0419 870 240
Marktg: Marlene J 0418 369 852

The YVBS meets on the second Tuesday of each month now at Cire Services (Formerly Upper Yarra Community House or Morrison House)

**Old Hereford Road,
Mount Evelyn**

Meetings begin at 7:30pm.



118 B8

Saturday Workshops are 2-4:30pm on the Last Saturday of the month, at the same venue as monthlies!

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The Yarra Valley Bonsai Society Newsletter

Highlights from March & April 2017

Our March club meeting featured Trevor McComb from Bonsai Art who spoke and demonstrated on Japanese Shimpaku junipers (*Juniperus chinensis* var. *Sargentii*).

Junipers are a large family comprising 60 - 70 varieties, native to Europe, Asia, Africa, and North America. None are indigenous to Australia. They are long-lived, some up to 1000 years old, and range from ground covers to trees that may be 30m tall. *Juniperus squamata* is the most common juniper available locally due to its fast growth rate being more attractive to the nursery industry, but shimpaku is 10 times better for bonsai purposes. Shimpaku's advantages include hardiness, long-lived, flexible, less dieback, softer foliage, and drought tolerant. It is also possible to get back-budding on old wood.

Shimpaku are often shown with the bark rubbed off. Trevor considers this a personal taste issue, but also notes that this practice can help to 'see' the tree during the design process, can assist dormant buds to break, and removes living space for invasive bugs.



Above - Trevor demonstrates Shimpaku styling techniques.

When working a shimpaku, only remove up to 30% of the foliage at a time, otherwise the tree can revert to producing juvenile needle-type foliage. Create pads of foliage by removing anything growing up and down. Cut individual shoots in the pads back, almost to the previous year's growth.

Junipers can be worked almost all year round. Repot ideally in late winter/early spring, but don't repot until the tree gives signs that it is needed, typically water run-off or lifting out of the pot.

Squamata will take gross amounts of fertilizer, but shimpaku not so much - however it is one variety which will take in water and fertilizer through its foliage. Trevor uses Osmocote or similar mixed with the potting mix, and applies liquid fertilizers every couple of weeks throughout the growing season.

The April meeting featured a demonstration by Michael Simonetto on *Juniperus chinensis* 'Blue Alps'. Michael grew his tree from a cutting, comprising something like 3 years in a pot, followed by 5 years in the ground, and then another 4 years in a pot, all the while continually changing the leader to develop trunk taper, and working the roots to develop the nebari and also promote trunk taper. Michael fed heavily during the growing seasons, and says that it is difficult to overfeed them.

Calendar Dates:

- 9th May (Tuesday) YVBS Monthly Meeting. 7:30pm. Cire Services.
- 13th May (Saturday) YVBS Special Carving Workshop. 10am to 1pm. Cire Services
- 19th May to 22nd May (Friday to Monday) AABC National Convention. Brisbane.
- 21st May (Sunday) Japan Festival. 10am to 5pm. Box Hill Town Hall.
- 23rd May (Tuesday) YVBS Novice Course starts. 7pm to 9pm. Cire Services.
- 27th May (Saturday) "Last Saturday of the Month" Workshop. 2:00pm. Cire Services.
- 3rd June (Saturday) Satsuki Interest Group Meeting. 1:30 to 4:30pm. Bonsai Art Nursery, Heatherton.
- 13th June (Tuesday) YVBS Monthly Meeting. 7:30pm. Cire Services.
- 24th June (Saturday) "Last Saturday of the Month" Workshop. 2:00pm. Cire Services.

See also the Events Calendar on our website: www.yarravalleybonsai.org.au

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Highlights from March & April - Cont. From Page 1

The Blue Alps is a prickly juniper, and Michael's tip for those of us with sensitive hands is to spray the foliage with water before work, which softens the prickly foliage tips.

Michael was originally aiming for a formal upright style, but now calls it a straight trunk style as the branch placements are not in accordance with formal upright guidelines. Michael styling design was inspired by a picture from nature, but he is a believer in planning ahead where possible before commencing styling, and making a sketch of the desired outcome. He says that it is not necessary to have an even progression of diminishing branch lengths up the tree, and that varying lengths can look more natural. Above all, he advocates the philosophy promoted by Walter Pall, John Naka and others - make your bonsai look like a tree, and not your tree look like a bonsai.

When styling the tree, Michael worked from the bottom up and cut branches off leaving a stub behind. The stubs can be used as wiring anchor points, and may be jinned to enhance the appearance of the design. Michael jinned some of the stubs now, and says that he will apply lime sulphur for preservation after the wood has dried.

Michael also demonstrated a creative use of shari on branches, as illustrated in the photo below. Creating a shari below a thick branch produces the illusion of a much thinner branch, a technique which can be very useful when you are stuck with thick branches emanating from much too high on the trunk but in a very desired position...as happens all too often!

Michael supports the pruning technique put forward by Trevor, of pruning to a shoot rather than pinching.



Top - Michael Simonetto gets stuck into styling his juniper.

Middle left - the finished tree

Middle right - the tree from nature as inspiration, but not a template.

Left - innovative use of shari on a branch to promote the illusion of a thinner branch.



Killer Grape Vines?

Club committee member Marian W reports on a recent killer experience: In the recent hot weather I moved my azaleas and other small plants plus approx. 30 cuttings into the shade of an ornamental grape vine. All was well for a couple of weeks then I noticed that the smaller plants and cuttings were looking burnt – how could that happen in the shade I asked myself. Looking harder I realised that the damaged plants were ones that grape leaves had fallen on them! After consulting Dr Google it became apparent that grape leaves are considered very toxic to dogs, but not to other pets or humans.

After assessing the damage I had lost 25 cuttings, four small azaleas, two small cotoneasters plus burn damage on two Kingsville Box. The poison must be systemic because cutting off burnt branches did not seem to help. The larger plants did not suffer at all fortunately. Needless to say the grape vine has been introduced to the saw and will be replaced with a shade sail!

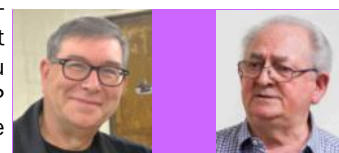


Library Check-out!

YVBS has subscribed to the local bonsai magazines produced by the AABC and Ian Glew. Copies of all issues are in the library for perusal or borrowing. Remember, the checkout period for books and other library material is one month. If you check out a book and are not able to make the next meeting, you can return the book at a workshop or even post it to the club PO Box.

Trade Table Cheque-out!

The trade table has been restocked with new tools, wire and other accessories. Lorraine Simpson and other pots also in stock. Don't forget the club's tool sharpening kit, available for use at meetings. Anything else you would like to see stocked? Just advise at the trade table or to any committee member.



Member Profile

Marc M (senior) and stepson Mark L have recently joined our club. Marc is originally from the island of Mauritius and has been partnered to Margaret for 41 years. Mark is from Melbourne and is married with two daughters. Marc is retired after working in the art/education field, and is an accomplished artist. Mark is Workplace Engagement Manager for the beyondblue organisation.

Marc has always had a love of nature and first became interested in bonsai about 4 years ago. Mark first pursued bonsai about 30 years ago but drifted when other youthful pursuits occupied his interest. He came back about 4 years ago when gifted a bonsai for Christmas...from Marc! Both are largely self-taught from books, internet research, and asking questions.

Marc has around 30 bonsai in training but only a handful he deems worth mentioning, of which his favourite is a 13 tree forest planting of trident maples. Mark has a similar number of trees in training and 2 or 3 that he considers 'bonsai'. His favourite style is forest planting and he has a couple of trident maple and one English elm forest.



Ask Mr. Miyagi.....



Q. I think that I would like to grow a bonsai from scratch, and have collected some seed to use. Is there anything special I should be aware of?

A: If you decide to grow a bonsai from seed, it is better to start shaping the plant as soon as possible. To do this, the first steps consist of pruning the tap root and shaping the trunk. Once the first pair of leaves have dropped off, uproot the seedlings and prune the tap root and any other roots that are too long. Replant in a suitable growing pot, and unless you want a formal upright style, prune the apex of the seedling to stimulate greater ramification. You should also loose-wire the seedling to introduce movement to the trunk, especially low down close to the soil.

Introduce the seedlings progressively to full sun. The time when you can begin to fertilize depends on whether you have had to cut off many roots from the seedling. If you have not, then begin within 5 days of dropping of the first pair of leaves, If you have, then one month later.

The sun, fertilizer and water will make the seedlings ramify quickly, and they will be healthier and grow faster. However, protect them in mid-summer when the heat from the sun's rays will be excessive for them.

Watch the wire! Seedling grow and thicken quickly, and so the wire will not need to stay on for any great time. Remove and re-wire when necessary to promote an attractive movement to the trunk of your tree.

Members may submit questions to Mr. Miyagi c/o the YVBS web forum or per the club email: info@yarravalleybonsai.org.au

Workshops at Craig's

The Club periodically organises a series of small workshops at Craig Wilson's Gentiana Nursery in Olinda, where members can take along their trees and get the benefit of Craig's bonsai expertise in developing and styling their trees. Even the most experienced members in our club appreciate getting independent advice from our own bonsai guru! And being a small group workshop means getting plenty of individual time with Craig.

More sessions will be organized later in the year, typically both Thursday and Sunday sessions are available. Members are encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities when they arise - contact Marlene to register interest.



NEW PRODUCT LINE....for those starting out or with a handful of bonsai, I have introduced a **50/50** mix of **ORCHIATA PINE BARK** and **DIATOMITE 2-7mm** in a **20L bucket @ \$25.00**. Also available are **DIATOMITE 35L bags @ \$25.00** and **ORCHIATA PINE BARK 40L bags (3-6 or 6-9mm) @ \$30.00**. **ORCHID POTS** are available in a range of sizes. To order call Julie **0419 870 240** or email julie@bonsairoots.com.au



2017 Benvenuti Festival

Our club participated in the Yarra Valley Benvenuti Festival in March by provision of a display of bonsai trees and a semi-continuous bonsai demonstration. Geoff, Rudi, Marlene, Howard, Marian, and Lindsay represented the club at the function.

The festival was held at the picturesque Killara Estate Winery and vineyard at Seville, and featured a number of local industries and groups displaying and selling their wares. Continuous entertainment was featured on the stage from an array of local musical and cultural talent. The weather looked threatening, but cleared to a very pleasant and mild day.



Throughout the day, we spoke with a number of visitors to our display, and are hopeful of attracting a number of new members to our club from this activity.

The Festival was considered to be another great success by the organizers, and attracted many hundreds of visitors on the day who all enjoyed the festivities.



Kudos, Accolades and Thanks

- To all sellers who participated in our Sale Day, and contributed to its success.
- To Scott Martin and Dynamite Printing for producing our Sale Day promotional flyers.
- To Marg Fenn of Hachinoki Pottery for donating a pot for a future club raffle, and to Tracey F of Murrumbung Pottery for donating a number of pots for club use.
- To Trevor McComb from Bonsai Art and Michael Simonetto for their very informative presentations at recent club meetings.

End-Of-Month Saturday Workshop

The regular Last Saturday of the Month Workshop provides a relaxed atmosphere, but with plenty of advice and assistance available if required. It is great to see a variety of trees being worked on, we can all learn from each other and appreciate the trees in their various stages of development. Activities can vary from starter stock development, styling, trimming, wiring, defoliating, carving, to repotting.

All members and guests are encouraged to drop in with or without a tree, or for a coffee and chat - 2:00 to 4:30 pm.

Many present club members were first introduced to the Club through dropping in to a Saturday Workshop, and we hope that this continues into the future.



Right - Members at work at the Saturday Workshop



Trading hours: Monday to Friday 9:00am – 5:00pm

Weekends 10:00am – 4:00pm

Visit our website www.bonsaisensation.com.au for more information

Tree Profile: New Zealand Christmas Tree - Pōhutukawa - *Metrosideros excelsa*

General: According to *Wikipedia* the *Metrosideros excelsa* is a coastal evergreen tree in the myrtle family, Myrtaceae that produces a brilliant display of red (or occasionally orange, yellow or white) flowers made up of a mass of stamens. Pohutukawa is one of twelve species endemic to New Zealand. Renowned for its vibrant colour and its ability to survive even perched on rocky, precarious cliffs, it has found an important place in New Zealand's culture for its strength and beauty and is regarded as a chiefly tree (rākau rangatira) by Māori. It provides a blaze of colour over Christmas.

Metrosideros kermadecensis is endemic to the volcanic Kermadec Islands about 900 km north-east of New Zealand. It is very similar to, and often confused with, the pōhutukawa of the mainland, differing mainly by having smaller, more oval leaves, and by flowering throughout the year.

Metrosideros is a common Bonsai in New Zealand with a very attractive bark and aerial roots, but tend to be hard to get to flower as bonsai!

Lighting & Temperature: Place in full sun to promote flowering, but just morning sun is o.k. too - protect from frost while young!

Watering: Daily if in full sun, but less in winter - they don't like having their roots wet for too long and prefer a well-draining soil.

Feeding: They need heavy feeding through spring and autumn! Best to use a slow or controlled release type fertilizer like Native Osmocote at the drip line. You can use liquid fertilizer like Charlie Carp throughout the seasons. Don't use fertilizers with high phosphate!

Repotting: Should be done after flowering at the warmest time of the year, using a well drained soil. Older trees every two to four years, some growers repot every year regardless of age.

Propagation: Easy from seeds in spring, semi ripe cuttings in autumn.

Pruning: Best time is after flowering, leave 4 leaves with buds in the axis when you prune - don't prune or pinch again until next year if you want flowers! You'll sacrifice the flowers if you like to shape - that's what I've done.

Lee Wilson is pruning his back quite hard in August and will get lots of new shoots which he lets grow, because they are the ones to get flowers on them and feeding heavily in that time!

They will bud from old wood, so a nice shape can usually be regained!

Wiring: On young branches only, the older wood on Pohutukawa becomes very hard and difficult to shape with wire.

Pests and diseases: Scales and caterpillars - use a systemic insecticide sprayed regularly through summer.

Styles: Informal upright, single or multiple trunks, semi cascades, windswept and root over rock.



Special Carving Workshop

The club held a very popular Special Carving Workshop last year which we will repeat this year, again under the expert guidance of Michael Simonetto.

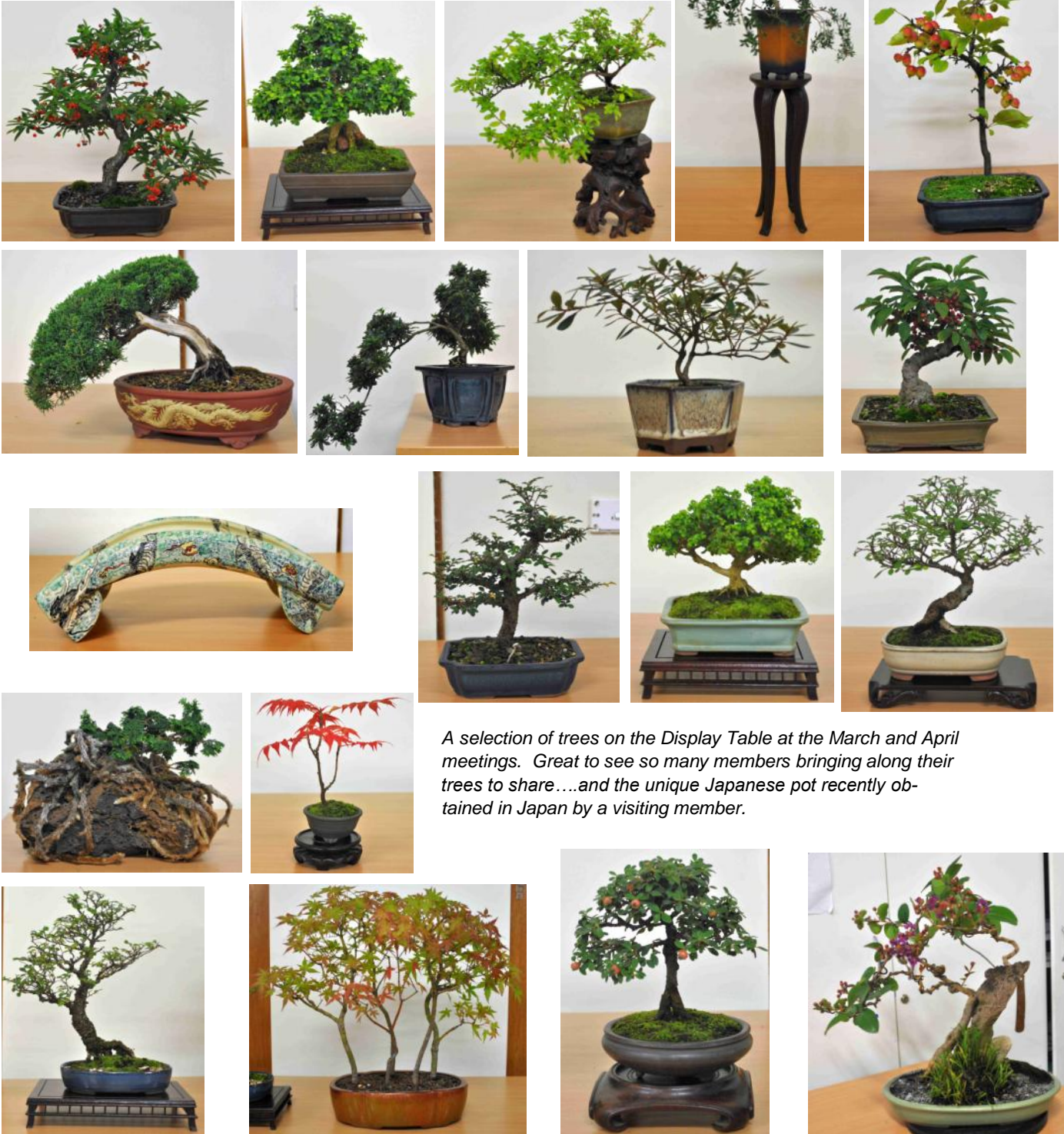
It is scheduled for Saturday 13th May from 10:00am to 1:00pm at Cire Services. Cost for participants is \$10, and observers may attend for free. Pre-registration is required for participants, but observers may just show up on the day.

Workshop activities can range from serious carving using big power tools, down to learning how to create jins (dead branch stubs) and shari (dead wood on trunks and branches).

Many trees can be improved by increasing the appearance of age through the use of dead wood, and this is an ideal opportunity to learn or apply the skill at a very cheap price! Register with Marlene if you would like to participate - spaces are still available.



On The Display Table



A selection of trees on the Display Table at the March and April meetings. Great to see so many members bringing along their trees to share....and the unique Japanese pot recently obtained in Japan by a visiting member.

BONSAI ART NURSERY

New Trading Hours

Mon, Tues, Thur, Fri - 9:00am to 5:00pm

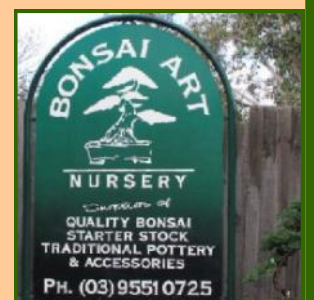
Sat, Sun - 10:00am to 4:00pm

Closed Wednesday

Great selection of bonsai, starters, and pots including a range of quality Japanese pots.

www.bonsaiart.com.au

236 Old Dandenong Road, Heatherton



Bonsai Calendar: May - June

As Autumn draws to a close, your deciduous trees have completed their growth cycle and are in preparation for dormancy. Evergreen varieties may not stop growing completely but their growth rate will slow down dramatically. Among many other tasks, winter is a great time to contemplate styling and restyling your bonsai (especially deciduous trees). Having the ability to see the skeleton of your trees will assist you in improving the basic branch structure and ramification of your bonsai.

Here are a few things to consider over the winter months.

- Remove all fruit and seeds from your trees as it can promote die back and disease.
- Once all the green leaves have changed or fallen you can begin cutting back on deciduous trees to shape with out fear of the tree bleeding.
- After all leaves have fallen, clean up all debris around your bonsai area (including the tops of the pots), to reduce potential homes and hiding places for pests.
- Any trees that have been protected from the summer sun can be pushed back into the open. The winter sun will promote bud development and tighten spring growth.
- Adjust your watering routine as your trees will be using less water. Rain may be more common. Avoid over watering at this time of year as trees are extremely susceptible to root rot. Keep deciduous trees on the dry side to promote autumn colour.
- If possible, make a habit of watering at the warmest part of the day. This will give the excess water a chance to drain before the cold nights.
- Keep an eye on pots that get completely covered with moss. This may interrupt the water intake and increase the chance of root rot.
- May and June are the best times to do heavy pruning and shaping to most conifers.
- Wire and bend branches while trees are on the dry side of the watering cycle. This will improve the flexibility of the branches and so reduce cracking or breaking.
- Fertilizing isn't required for any dormant trees, but evergreens can still benefit from a light feeding.

March Sale Day

Another YVBS Sale Day was successfully held in March at Japara House in Kilsyth, with many happy buyers taking advantage of the wide range of trees, pots and accessories on sale. Sellers were generally happy, with most immediately booking tables for the next scheduled Sale Day in November. The small bonsai exhibition in the foyer attracted attention, and the workshop immediately following the Sale kept our experienced members on their toes with advice for members and Sale Day attendees - hopefully prospective members!



Bonsai Novice Course

The start date for the Bonsai Novice Course has been pushed back to Tuesday 23rd May, and vacancies are still available. The course runs over 5 consecutive Tuesday evenings from 7:00pm to 9:00pm, skipping our normal meeting night, and cost is \$100 per person which includes a comprehensive 30 page course booklet. This booklet is an ongoing reference source containing all of the basic bonsai growth and development techniques.

For any new members who want to learn the basics of our art, this is the course for you. Don't delay - there are minimum attendees required to make the course viable and we are not quite there yet. Contact Marlene to register.



ヤラ谷間盆栽会

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www.yarravalleybonsai.org.au

A group for all lovers of bonsai in the "far east" of Melbourne



Yarra Valley Bonsai Society
PO Box 345
Mount Evelyn, Victoria 3796
Australia

*Looking Ahead to
May & June 2017*



Our monthly meeting on 9th May will be our highly regarded **"Team Challenge Cup"**! A night of fun and great learning, bring your tools and an open mind! **NOT TO BE MISSED!** There will be NO Bonsai Basics Review, but a short talk by our "Three Bonaiteers" David, Victor and Alan about their recent 'Japan Adventure'! Display Table: "Autumn Colors & Members Choice".



"Special Workshop - Carving" with Michael Simonetto on Saturday 13th May 10:00AM - 1:00PM at Cire Services - former UYCH, Mt Evelyn. Participants - \$10.00, Observers FREE!



Our **"Novice Course"** with Craig Wilson will commence on Tuesday 23rd May and will run for two hours per evening for five consecutive Tuesdays, 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM at Cire Services - former UYCH, Mt Evelyn (hopping the June monthly meeting), finishing on 27th June. Registration with Marlene on mjerlitschka@iprimus.com.au



Our monthly workshop will be on Saturday 27th May, 2:00PM - 4:30PM at Cire Services - former UYCH.



Our monthly meeting on 13th June will be a Talk on **"Training in Japan"** & Demo on **"Wiring Technique"** by Scott Martin. There will be NO Bonsai Basics Review! Display Table: "Informal Upright Style & Members' Choice".



Our monthly workshop will be on Saturday 24th June, 2:00PM - 4:30PM at Cire Services - former UYCH.



Other Events



AABC 30th Australian National Bonsai Convention, Friday 19th - Monday 22nd May 2017, at the Royal on the Park, Brisbane, Qld. Check out the website for more details - <http://www.bonsaisocietyqld.asn.au>



Sunday 21st May **Japan Festival**, 10:00AM - 5:00PM, at Box Hill Town Hall & Box Hill TAFE, 1000-1022 Whitehorse Road, Box Hill, Costs: General Public: \$5.00, 6-11 years old \$3.00, Free Entry for Children up to 5 years old; Disabled persons (+ 1 attendant) & Seniors Card Holders; Persons in Kimono, Yukata or full cosplay. Check out their website for more details - <http://www.jcv-au.org/japanfestival/>

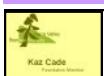


Satsuki Interest Group Meeting on Saturday 3rd June, 1:30PM - 4:30PM, at "Bonsai Art" Nursery, 236 Old Dandenong Road, Heatherton.



YVBS FORUM: For new members, it bears repeating that our club has an on-line bulletin board and archive. In addition to the announcements and discussions on topics of bonsai interest, the forum also contains many newsletters from other clubs around Australia. These are to be found (surprise, surprise) in the folder entitled "Newsletters from Other Clubs" and are kept for approximately six months. There are also publications such as "Bonsai Magazine" and the "Satsuki Society Newsletter" which are archived in the library folder available only to members. If you visit the site and register as a user, please email Rudi via the club gmail so that he may add you as a club member user. Just visit our main webpage

<http://www.yarravalleybonsai.org.au> and follow the FORUM link on the left to the forum.



Member Benefits Refer to the website for a list of discounts to members upon presentation of a current & valid YVBS Membership card. "Freebies" of donated items are also made available from time to time at monthly meetings.

ADVERTISERS & SPONSORS:

Advertising on our website and/or in the newsletter is available for any registered business or sole trader. Society Sponsorship opportunities are capped at three for any year, however supportership opportunities still remain for any business in an area related to the craft of bonsai.

For a prospectus or further information contact Rudi via the society's external email: info@yarravalleybonsai.org.au